

Prof. J. Lederberg
Chairman

November 27, 1957

Dr. Carl Eckart
Scripps Institution for Oceanography
La Jolla, California

Dear Dr. Eckart:

To yours of the 18th:

I have the highest regard for Dr. Novick and his accomplishments as a biologist and as a biophysicist. He has made several contributions of critical importance, outstanding among which are the development of the chemostat as an indispensable tool for physiological and genetic studies of microorganisms, and the discovery of the regulation of the 'spontaneous' mutation rate by the levels of purines and their ribosides in the environment. This last work, which includes the recognition of certain substances as 'antimutagens' is not quoted as often as it should be, as it underlies much current thinking on the metabolic basis of 'spontaneous mutation'.

More recently, he has undertaken studies on the stabilization of metabolic states, through feedback mechanisms, which offer a tangible basis for important theoretical advances in cell biology.

His research has always been impeccable in design and most ingenious in execution, especially as he has been able to take full advantage of his training in the physical sciences.

He is furthermore an incisive and critical correspondent, and I will regret the opportunity of having him close to hand for personal discussion of many problems of common interest -- which is to say I have been directly interested in a proposal to find an attractive place for Novick here at Wisconsin, but I know he would much prefer the environment and long-term opportunities at La Jolla. In the particular area of biophysics, I know of no one who could measure as a more stimulating and productive colleague.

Although I have known Novick for many years, I have had no opportunity to see him in action as a teacher in formal courses. However, for some time, he has been invited to give an occasional lecture in my own course (microbial genetics) and he has never failed to elicit the most enthusiastic interest. Similarly, while I have no information on his role in general University affairs, I can speak for his interest in public affairs-- e.g. he is on the Board for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.

Although for some time, the organizational pattern at the University of Chicago had not managed to find a really appropriate place for Novick's talent and gift, he has more recently been effectively recognized. However, I know that he feels (quite rightly!) that Chicago is not the best place to rear his family. I have no hesitation in recommending Novick to you in the strongest terms.

Yours sincerely,